



ROPEX 2014
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Spanish Painter Diego Velázquez • Ellsworth Civil War Covers
ROPEX 2015 • New Issues

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ROPEX 2014

Attendance was down (dealers, collectors, and exhibitors) but for those who did attend in any capacity, ROPEX 2014 was certainly a successful National show. They say pictures are worth a thousand words, so here are 4000 words about this May's show.



A portion of the show floor, exhibits are in the back.



ROPEX chairman Tom Fortunato (yellow shirt) explains an exhibit to a group of Boy Scouts. Some serious "shopping" appears to be progressing with dealers just to the right of the exhibits.



Mary Iman, chairperson of our Youth Activities Programs, presents awards to two of the nine Design-A-Stamp winners, Dion Mather and Ian Szemcsak, while Frank Tritto, benefactor for the Design-A-Stamp program, looks on. All nine winning stamp designs can be found on the ROPEX 2014 webpage.



Mary and Bill Iman prepare the kid's table for a busy day. Is that our treasurer Dave Robinson pretending to be a kid?

Look for a further discussion on ROPEX headed forward by ROPEX chairman Tom Fortunato on page 5

President's Message



My fellow RPA Members,

I am pleased to welcome you to our 102nd consecutive program year, which kicks off on Thursday, September 11, 2014. Your officers have been working diligently this summer to create stimulating program presentations, comfortable meeting surroundings and exciting special events. We have scheduled a special dinner meeting for a nominal fee on October 9 with an original presentation on the WWII stamp and memorial by our friend John Babbit, which I encourage you to attend. While our presentation calendar is filled through year end, we still have room for presentations after the first of the year. Please volunteer to contribute and you will be signed up for a mutually convenient date. You will learn more about the upcoming year at our first meeting. See you on the 11th.

Your President, Rich Spinelli

Upcoming RPA Meetings

Meetings are held downstairs at the Brighton Reformed Church, 805 Blossom Road beginning at 7 PM. The first half hour is reserved for silent auction viewing, show and trade among members, and general social interaction. The night's program kicks off at about 7:30 PM. An elevator is available for handicapped members.

- Thurs., Sept. 11** "Postal Currency"
by Art Cohen
- Thurs., Sept. 25** The Future of ROPEX
- Thurs., Oct. 9..** *(a dinner mtg., details to follow)*
"World War II Memorial Issue" by John Babbitt
- Thurs., Oct. 23..** "Norway through Stamps"
by Fred Haynes
- Thurs., Nov. 13.** "1898 Canada Map Stamp"
by Bob Lighthouse
- Thurs., Dec 11.** "The Catharine McKie
Correspondence of 1847 Issue Covers (Troy
to South Easton NY)" by Mark Scheuer

Come join us each and every other Thursday night. Visit the RPA website for an updated and complete list of Fall 2014 events and meeting topics.

STAMP SHOWS THIS FALL

For those with an itch to collect via stamp shows there is one in the area each of the next 3 months:

Sunday September 21: RS Stamp Show

Where: North Greece Fireman's Field
3666 Latta Rd. (Rte. 18) in Rochester
When: 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Info: rsstamp@frontiernet.net

Fri.-Sat. October 17-18: STEPEX 2014

Where: American Legion Post
45 South Olcott Rd, Big Flats, NY
When: Sat. 10:00 AM– 6:00 PM
Sun. 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Info: Sponsored by the Elmira Stamp Club

Saturday November 15: Buffalo Stamp Club

Where: VFW Leonard Post
2450 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga, NY
When: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Info: www.buffalostampclub.org

And if you have ever had a notion to travel south to APS headquarters in Bellafonte, PA, perhaps the following provides the perfect time to do so

AEROPHILATELY 2014

Friday-Sunday September 12-14:

Where: American Philatelic Center, Bellafonte, PA
What: Multiple Symposium Sessions
Over 50 distinguished exhibits
Sponsor: American Air Mail Society
Info: www.americanairmailssociety.org/AERO2014

The Stamp Insider

For any of you who used to enjoy the hard copy version of the Stamp Insider, but lost track of the magazine when it went "online only", here is a link.

<http://www.stampinsider.org/>

Each issue is full of local and current information on the clubs, shows, and dealers of the region. RPA's news is on page 68 of the latest issue.

Fun Postal Fact

Did you know that a group of postage stamps was once issued that were also small phonograph records with native folk songs recorded on one side. The "stamps" could actually be played on a record player. Still can, if you can find a record player!

Do you know the country and the year of issue? Think a bit and then go to page 4 for the answer.



Spanish Painter Diego Velázquez A Presentation by Mario Sarra

RPA Club member Mario Sarra is an art enthusiast and he has merged this interest with his philatelic hobby by collecting “art on stamps”. At our May 22nd club meeting Mario focused on the art and stamps of one Spanish artist. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, a renowned 17th century artist and painter, has been featured not only on stamps of Spain, but also by many other countries. Mario led us through his life and paintings on stamps.

Velázquez painted everyday people, famous people, mythological characters, religious scenes, historic events and much more. Many of his paintings of members of the Habsburg Royal Family of Spain found their way onto the stamps of several countries, including Guinea-Bissau's 1984 #558 with Queen Mariana of Austria (King Phillip's second wife) and Yemen's issue depicting Prince Balthasar Carlos, King Phillip's only son with his first wife).



The later painting, of a riding Prince Carlos also appeared on stamps from Liberia and Rwanda even though the prince died at age 17.

In 1961, Spain honored the 300th anniversary of Diego's death with stamps depicting four of his more famous paintings.



All told Mario showed us over 70 stamps depicting the work of Diego Velázquez, culminating with Togo's recent souvenir sheet commemorating the 350th anniversary of the artist's death in 2010.



Diego Rodriguez de Selva y Velázquez (1599-1650)

If you would like to see Mario's full presentation, it is linked on our meetings webpage. Just scroll to the 2014 entries at the bottom of the list and select either the pdf or ppt versions. You can access many other club presentations here also.



Ellsworth Civil War Patriotic Envelopes A Presentation by John Stoltz

The Civil War has been the focus of interest for generations of philatelists, and the ongoing USPS philatelic material commemorating the 150th anniversary of various battles and events of the 4 year war, has perhaps rekindled that interest or generated new collectors.

RPA member John Stoltz recently acquired a philatelic exhibit containing a significant number of covers featuring Colonel Ephriam Ellsworth, the first Union officer killed in the American Civil War. At our May 8th club meeting John led us through the cover collection and the life/story of Colonel Ephriam Elmer Ellsworth. The presentation focused on the many patriotic envelopes generated by his early death during the war..

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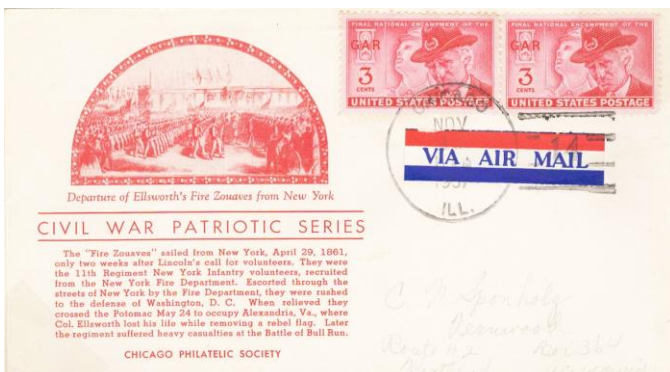


This Ohio cancelled cover depicts Ellsworth, a native of Malta, NY (20 miles north of Albany), with a poem below.

Colonel Ellsworth's death occurred on May 24, 1861 in a hotel lobby in Alexandria, Virginia. His passing became a rallying event for the Union forces and was later recreated in a host of postal covers that have now become sought after Civil War pieces. This postally used and expertised cover is a treasured piece in the collection.



In 1957, the Chicago Philatelic Society issued 3 cacheted covers (see below) honoring Ellsworth and the "Fire Zouaves", the name given to the 11th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment which Ellsworth led to Virginia that fateful day.



As with most RPA club events, John's full presentation, which includes many more patriotic Civil War covers, can be accessed from the club's online meeting site.

ROPEX 2014 EXHIBIT AWARDS

For a full list of all 16 exhibits and the Full Palmares, as awarded at the Show Banquet, please visit the ROPEX show page on our website. Six RPA members exhibited at the show (Tom Fortunato, Fred Haynes, John Lighthouse, Robert Meegan, Alan Parsons, and Stephen Suffet). Stephen Suffet's exhibit entitled "Usages of the United States Four-Cent Air Mail Postal Card of 1949" won the Single Frame Grand Award. The multi-frame Grand Award was won by Rodney W. Paige from his 8 frame exhibit entitled "Great Britain: The Early Cancellations".

Fun Postal Fact Answer



They hardly look like stamps, but in April of 1973 Bhutan issued 7 stamps that actually were phonograph records. These 5 are advertised on the internet as "mint, never hinged, never played!" And you could have them all for \$138.88 US dollars.

RPA Dues for 2014-2015

With the annual renewal of our stamp interests that comes with all the fall RPA activity, it is also time for all to renew their club membership. To remain an active RPA member, the \$20 payment can be made at our September 11th meeting or it can be mailed to P.O. Box 10206 Brighton Station, Rochester, NY 14610-0206. Checks are payable to Rochester Philatelic Society (RPA).



There were no letters received this summer. You all have 2 months to change that for the next issue!

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ROPEX 2015

By Tom Fortunato **ROPEX Committee Chairman**

Talk continues about the future of ROPEX, and rightfully so. The hobby and we collectors continue to adjust to a changing marketplace.

First, and let me clear about this: ROPEX is budgeted annually to minimally break even and hopefully make a profit to help defray our club expenses that yearly exceed our dues and other income. That has been our mandate over many years and even more important as the RPA budget shrinks.

At the first sign of a possible ROPEX deficit, the ROPEX budget is scoured to reduce costs every way possible to best keep it in balance. Some of things are noticeable, like a less-formal show program, others perhaps not, like reducing our advertising in philatelic publications. We also look for new sources of revenue, like this past show's RPA sales table that brought in \$900 from donated items, greatly adding to our bottom line.

But the sad truth is that our budget is mainly driven by the income brought in by admissions, dealers and exhibits; and expenses such as our venue, security and WSP obligations dealing with the exhibits, especially judging fees.

When any of those are out of sync, we have a deficit. That was the case this past May. Despite our best efforts we ended up with a \$1,600 loss. Dealer attendance was at a low, as were exhibit entries, and attendance was anything but stellar. We've addressed one concern, our venue cost, by moving ROPEX 2015 out of Rochester and to a more affordable place, the Canandaigua Civic Center. Dave Robinson's negotiation skills are to be commended, as its final price was lower than we had initially expected. Based on our anticipated ROPEX 2015 expenses and with the same number of attending dealers and exhibits as in 2014, our show is in the black.

But you must understand that dealers, who pay the majority of our bills, are seeing lowered attendance and clamoring for lower dealer table fees to offset their costs. The best way we can do that is to guarantee that we get more dealers to cover our overall budget as well as any potential reduction offered them. To some dealers, that infringes on their potential profits, as more dealers translate into a smaller cut of the collector spending pie for them. It's an interesting circuitous cycle.

Bottom line—we will not continue ROPEX, at least in its current form, if we end up with another financial loss. We have had a few other smaller losses in the past decade, and the trend of show profits versus losses is not going in the right direction.

So what does that mean? The ROPEX Committee for several years has been discussing options. Among the most drastic are to 1) keep ROPEX a national level show but run a 2 day rather than a 3 days show, 2) scrap national level WSP patronage all together and convert ROPEX to a 2 or 3 day regional level show, and 3) disband ROPEX completely.

The move in 2015 to Canandaigua will be telling one way or another and hopefully bode well for ROPEX's future. If not, it's time to make a tough choice. What do you think?

Editor's NOTE: The second September club meeting is designed to solicit member input and ideas about the future of ROPEX.

British Guinea #1



Sotheby's – June 17, 2014

Winning Bid was \$7.9M without fees.
With fees the invoice price was \$9.48M.



How many of you spent some of your summer visiting shows or shops or otherwise adding to your collections? Someone spend almost \$10M at a Sotheby auction in June for British Guinea #1. The successful bidder remained anonymous. Come on fess up, was it you? If so, please bring the stamp along to an RPA fall meeting. We would all like to see it !

US Commemorates NY Artist Group

On August 21st, the USPS commemorated the Hudson River School, a 19th century group of New York-based landscape painters, with a four stamp series depicting their works. The original group of artists focused on scenes from the Hudson Valley region, but later painters expanded to the mid-west and eventually to the Rocky Mountains.

Clockwise from the lower left:

Frederick Edwin Church and a painting simply called "Sunset", **Thomas Moran** and his 1911 painting entitled "Grand Canyon of the Colorado River", and **Asher B. Durand** with a painting he called "Summer Afternoon". And, in the lower right we can all recognize Niagara Falls, here depicted by Hudson River School founder **Thomas Cole** in 1830.



Wouldn't landscape art make a nice topical subject?

Two More Civil War Issues



On July 30th in separate ceremonies in Petersburg, VA and in Mobile, AL, the Civil War Series was continued with the issuing of stamps commemorating the Siege of Petersburg and the Battle of Mobile Bay. It was at that later event that Admiral Farragut famously damned the torpedoes and ordered "Full Speed Ahead". As with some of earlier Civil War issues the stamps adorn a colorful and information souvenir sheet.



Has the Rochester Farmer's Market ever looked this colorful? These stamps were issued with the domestic postage Forever rate. The first day issue ceremony was on August 7th in Washington D.C. (the well known heartland of American agriculture).



Did you know that the club receives a new set of APS circuit booklets each month and that these booklets are available at all meetings. Here Lewis Greiff is finding material for his collection. Perhaps, you could too if you came to the meetings!